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SIGMA XI QUARTERLY

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

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ANNOUNCEMENT

The Twenty-second Convention of the Society of the Sigma Xi will be held in Toronto, Canada, in connection with the scientific meetings of convocation week. At the meeting of the Executive Committee last May the formal invitation to meet there was received and accepted and Wednesday, December 28, was decided upon as the time. A special committee has been appointed to provide for a program in accordance with the suggestions made at the Chicago convention by Dean Colter and approved by that convention. The general plan adopted by this committee is as follows:

- 2:00 P. M. public meeting with address by Dr. J. C. Merriam
- 4:00 convention business session
- 6:30 convention banquet
- 8:30 general social assembly

This special committee is planning for a more elaborate convention than has been held in the past and it is hoped that this will serve to mark a new era in the history of the society. Consonant with the development of the convention in a significant way comes the announcement in this number concerning the results of the campaign to endow a fellowship and the appointment of the first investigator under the auspices of the Society. These new movements make the matter of appointing delegates of the utmost importance and Professor McClung has sent to each chapter a special letter calling attention to this situation. It is hoped that the problem may receive the earnest attention of each member and that the chapters will make a special effort to lend their best assistance to the convention in every possible way.

THE TORONTO CONVENTION

There is important work to be done at the convention in Toronto. It requires the careful consideration of the best minds in the Society. Upon our various chapters rests the obligation of seeing that those prepared by interest and experience to give careful consideration to the business of Sigma Xi are there in the person of their representatives. Attention has been called to the need of foresight in the selection of delegates through letters to the chapter presidents, since they are the ones usually charged with the duty of appointment. If chapters could see their way clear to paying the expenses of delegates, who would then give time and attention to the business of the convention, much more constructive work could be done. In the absence of such careful study and preparation in advance of meetings, it is inevitable that the affairs of the Society should sometimes suffer neglect or experience hasty action.

Indeed it is fair to raise the question whether the Society can function effectively as a body, in its growing size and importance, with the present organization. Will it not be necessary, as in past stages of active growth, to delegate more power to the Executive Committee? I believe it will be agreed by all those intimately in touch with the affairs of the Society that it has been a much more effective body since the present form of organization, with greater power conferred on the Executive Committee, has been in operation. Now that the list of chapters is increasing and society activities becoming more comprehensive and diversified, it is increasingly important to provide a proper machinery for competent administration. Such matters are worthy of our most serious consideration.

Among the items of business before the convention will be the report of the Fellowship Committee. This should bring great satisfaction and encouragement to all who see the future of Sigma Xi with an eye sensitive to possibilities of greater service. No one thing in our history has demonstrated the fundamental need of such an organization as has the response to the request for money to support a system of research fellowships. When people, merely on an appeal through circular letters, are ready to put money into something, from which they expect no personal return, they indeed believe in it.

What then shall be done to care for the thousands of former active members who have left our colleges and universities, but who have retained an unexpected and vital interest in Sigma Xi? The canvass for funds to support the fellowship system has revealed the fact that we have been neglecting one of our most important duties and have lacked the support of yearly increasing numbers who could help mightily in carrying forward the really important work of the society. The committee on revision of membership has a plan to present which appears to the Executive Committee calculated to take advantage of this potential resource. This will be presented for action at Toronto.

During the year the Executive Committee has given very careful consideration to the applications of a number of institutions desiring chapters. Action upon the report of the committee upon these applications will be required. The number and character of the schools asking for connection with the Society indicate that the conviction that the organization has a wider field of usefulness than it has filled is correct.

Discussion of activities and policies this year will occur in surroundings of more than usual interest and significance. Sigma Xi is now approaching somewhat of a limit to its range of operation in this country—as yet it does not touch directly the life of any foreign institutions. If we commend ourselves in vision and action to our fellows in Canada, it may well be that thus we shall pass beyond national boundaries and become an international force to the development of scientific research.

Of much importance indeed is the selection of officers for the coming biennium, which will be a part of the business before the convention. Such action will be taken upon the report of a nominating committee, which will give careful thought to the needs of the Society in its recommendations. Should there be suggestions for the guidance of this committee they may be sent to the secretary for transmission to it.

Taking everything into consideration this is one of the most significant of our conventions and all chapters should be actively concerned to see that nothing is lacking in the way of preparation to make it a real success.

C. E. McCLUNG

SIGMA XI EXPENSES

The quality of a thing is fairly measured by its cost in money. No really good thing can be obtained at a small price. The principle is applicable to the conduct of an organization as well as to the securing of material things.

Thirty-five years ago when Sigma Xi was a small and relatively unimportant organization, the expenses of conducting its affairs were almost nothing. Since 1885 fundamental changes have taken place in the Society, not only in numerical growth, but also in expansion of policy—changes that are of vital importance to the Society and to the scientific interests of this country. The growth of the Society has affected all its departments of administration. The work of the secretary's office has been increased to an extent commensurate with the development of the Society to thirty-three chapters and thirteen thousand members. It would be criminal if the work of that office were curtailed in the slightest degree; curtailment could not be justified either in the minds of Sigma Xi men and women or of scientific men in general.

The affairs of the Society for which the Executive Committee is rightly held responsible must be conducted with the utmost caution and wisdom. This committee properly consists of representatives from different sections of the country, busy men who are willing to give of their ability and judgment and time to the successful conduct of the organization. If the work of the Executive Committee is to be done effectively and wisely, there will be connected with it an inevitable expense. This does not mean at all that the affairs of the Society are to be conducted extravagantly; such a tendency could not be justified. It means clearly and emphatically that the affairs of the Society must not be conducted so economically as to be ineffective or to curtail in any way the influence and work of the organization or to retard its growth. There is a point where economy becomes extravagance. Such economy could not be justified. Those who are responsible for the Society are responsible alike to prevent extravagance and to avoid too great economy. No curtailment must be permitted, no contentment with the *status quo* must be tolerated. The only safe attitude for an important organization like ours to take is to accept responsibilities of growth and expansion with all that they imply of increased care and cost.

The proposal of the Indiana Chapter to have the initiation fee of every new member include a dollar for the general society is amply justified by the situation. It is a matter of pride to everyone connected with Sigma Xi that the Society's affairs have become so important as to demand additional funds in the treasury. Our slogan must ever be FORWARD. We would be untrue to the spirit of research if we should ever stop moving forward; and for Sigma Xi to go backward would be such a shameful thing that no loyal member could harbor for a single instant such a thought about the Society.

E. E.